



## MEETING MINUTES / 20 OCTOBER 2015

### ATTENDANCE:

Present: Sarg, Farley, Armbruster, Carroll, Hampton, Lardizzone, Newman, Newstadt, Seppala, Showell, Smith, and Weir **85.7%**

Excused Absences: Corsa (Medical), and McMullen (Medical)

### CHAIRMAN'S OPENING REMARKS:

Commissioner Weir, on behalf of the commission, presented a prayer book to Director Kirby honoring his father.

### MEETING MINUTES:

A motion was made and the minutes were approved.

### ADMINISTRATIVE REMARKS:

#### VAMC- Robin Aube-Warren, Director:

Mentioned future MyVA Community Partnership meetings and the chair is Jim Webb (Wilmington University). Changes may be coming to Veterans Choice Program to allow outside providers to enroll. Currently veterans cannot choose an outside provider. The VAMC can answer questions about the choice card.

- (Sarg) Can you provide the status of the Georgetown Clinic?

New building will be located across from the current building, they are working on funds for leasing (covered by VA), and the project is about 18 – 24 months out.

- Can you provide information on hiring a psychiatrist?

Hiring isn't going well so may replace with a Nurse Practitioner. In addition, Tele-Health is an option.

Veteran Transportation Service is being created and will be funded for three years. They are soliciting for a manager position.

- (Newstadt) Will this veteran program work with DELDOT?

That is the plan.

- (Weir) Will the Nurse Practitioner meet veteran's psychiatric needs?

Nurse Practitioners can meet those needs especially in light of the shortage of mental health professionals.

- (Sarg) Recommend using transportation broker at VAMC to coordinate veteran transportation from center (i.e. coordinate with DELDOT, DAV, etc.). Also recommend working with Gary Morris.

- (Carroll) Can you update us on the parking garage and new entrance?

Garage contract has been awarded and groundbreaking will be in the spring. The new entrance project is delayed due to difficulties with the grounds.

#### Delaware Veterans Home (DVH) – Bill Peterson, Director:

Not present.

#### Home of the Brave, Director Jessica Finan:

Currently 14 male residents and 4 female residents. The Capitol Campaign Kickoff (awareness of new female facility) had 50 attendees. The groundbreaking ceremony is scheduled for 28 October / 1000 at the male compound. Members can contribute to the home through the Combined Federal Campaign.

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S COMMENTS:**

Shared a DVTF story in which a veteran secured a job and needed assistance obtaining fingerprints and bus passes. The emphasis was that not all requests are related to housing and utilities.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS:****William Witham, DE Veterans Treatment Court**

The treatment court is in its fifth year and is in all counties. The larger populations are in New Castle and Kent, and Richard Stokes is the Sussex judge. The program offers an alternative to incarceration with the majority of the cases being PTSD and substance abuse issues. The program involves low-level felons and all misdemeanors. The program should also assist veteran DUI/DWI cases as a bill has to be introduced to allow inclusion of DUI/DWI cases. This program would be an alternative to incarceration and following successful completion can re-obtain their licenses without additional costs.

- (Newstadt) How can cases be referred to veterans court?

Police now ask arrested members if they are a veteran, if so, they can be referred to a treatment court volunteer for inclusion. We are trying to make all magistrates aware of veteran status so the program can be utilized.

- (Showell) Does Sussex still need mentors?

Bill Gay has 25 mentors and continues to seek more.

- (Hampton) What is the mentor framework?

Being a mentor requires a criminal check, applications can be completed on line, and they are appointed following a review.

- (Newstadt) Are you granting expungements?

Successful program completion means you're eligible for expungement in three years.

**Barbara Cooke, Cemetery (Bear) Administrator**

A beautification project with the University of Delaware will involve the pond/waterfall/planting/walkways. The raise and realignment project continues and the cemetery expansion has been approved. The site received an inspection from the Cemetery (National) Grant Program and received a majority of highest marks to date. One area of concern involves the markers and how they are edged. Will work with the Department of Corrections team to ensure improvement.

- (Carroll) Please explain why the flags by the markers are leaning.

The flag holder holes and flag pole diameter vary so the flags lay differently. The areas are checked bi-annually for consistency.

**Liz Jiron, Operation Stand Down**

Thanked the commission for assisting with the stand down. Reported 106 service providers attended and over 1000 veterans signed up. Planning meetings for next year are held on the fourth Thursday of each month at the Fox Post.

**COMMITTEE REPORTS:****Bear Veterans Memorial Cemetery, Commissioner Armbruster:**

Expansion project approved will meet with National Cemetery Administration following contract awarding.

**Millsboro Veterans Memorial Cemetery, Commissioner Corsa:**

Expansion project approved will meet with National Cemetery Administration following contract awarding.

**Personnel, Director Kirby:**

No report

**Health and Human Services, Commissioner Corsa**

Director Kirby reported DVTF data: September/October – 24 requested and 15 granted / 62.5% / awarded \$9009.00 / balance \$67,807.00

**Legislative Affairs, Commissioner McMullen**

- (Sarg) recommended reviewing Washington Scene handout. Discussed letters that were sent to Delaware's elected officials to support the Survivor's Benefits Plan.

**Finance and Logistics, Commissioner Newman**

No report.

**Commemorative Affairs, Commissioner Showell**

Air Force Sergeants Association is hosting the Veterans Day bridge ceremony. Memorial Day is on a Monday next year so recommended 28 May/1030 (cemetery) and 30 May/1030 (bridge). Proposed dates were voted on and approved.

**ORGANIZATIONAL REPORTS:**

Commissioner McMullen (AFSA)

Not present.

Commissioner Armbruster (AL)

Department Officers were in Indianapolis for the national conference. Boys State oratorical contests are beginning and the Sons of the American Legion fundraiser netted funds for a youth heart transplant patient.

Commissioner Weir (AMVETS)

Will continue to research wheelchair ramp if additional information is still required.

Commissioner Smith (Del Vets)

Judy Campbell is seeking a Gulf War speaker for a Gold Star event, contact her for additional information.

Commissioner Lardizzone (DAV)

Commissioner Lardizzone passed his Veteran Service Officer certification requirement.

Commissioner Newstadt (JWV)

Two busloads of members visited the Holocaust Museum.

Commissioner Farley (MCL)

The Toys for Tots program begins soon and a box will be at the commission headquarters. Homeless veteran assistance posters and cards are available for distribution. The veteran count is slated for 10 – 12 November so sign up to volunteer.

Chairman Sarg (MOAA)

The national conference is schedule for Orlando later this month.

Commissioner Carroll (MOPH)

The Veteran Service Officer is on medical leave and William Jackson (Baltimore Regional Office) is covering Delaware.

Commissioner Seppala (MOWW)

Supported Fort Delaware, DE Military Heritage Foundation, and Dupont Veterans Day Observance events.

Commissioner Newman (VFW)

Commissioner Newman was appointed Chairman, Tomb of the Unknown Soldier where he will lay a ceremonial wreath. The department will lobby at Legislative Hall on 9 November. The Voice of Democracy Program (oratorical contest) for 9 -12 grade and Patriot Pens (essay contest) for 6 – 8 grade have 1 November deadlines.

Commissioner Corsa (VVA)

Not present.

Commissioner Showell (At Large)

The National Guard Washington DC Legislative Day is scheduled for 22 October. The National Guard Holiday Concerts are scheduled for 9 December / 1900 (Wilmington) at the Grand and 10 December / 1900 (Dover) at Dover Downs.

Commissioner Hampton (At Large)

Has flyers for the Gulf War Memorial Dedication fundraiser hosted by Harvest Ridge Winery.

#### **UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**

**S.W. Asia / OIF-OEF Memorial Legislative Hall (OPEN)**

The dedication is scheduled for 7 November / 1200 following a parade.

**S.W. Asia / OIF-OEF Memorial Kent County Memorial Park (OPEN)**

The dedication is scheduled for 11 November / 1400.

**POW/MIA Chair of Honor at DCVA (OPEN)**

Director Kirby will engage Mr. Carter to obtain a chair and mimic the Legislative Hall program.

**Public University “Course Scheduling Preference” (OPEN)**

Commissioner Armbruster noted Delaware Tech has priority course sign up for veterans and will inquire with other universities. Commissioner Newman will forward his University of Delaware contacts.

#### **NEW BUSINESS:**

Director Kirby proposed having two commission meetings outside of Kent County during 2016 and Commissioner Newstadt concurred with the recommendation. The matter will be formally introduced during the November meeting.

#### **ITEMS FOR THE GOOD AND WELFARE OF THE ORGANIZATION**

Commissioner Newstadt recommended formally recognizing Representative Jaques for his work with the commission and veterans. Commissioner Lardizzone mentioned the need to also include Senator Ennis in any recognition.

- (Sarg) Urged the Veteran Service Organizations to recognize both the representative and senator.

- (Lardizzone) Recommended adding them to the Friends of the Veterans Home Panel, the motion was accepted by the commission.

Commissioner Weir recommended having clothing with DCVA on it to assist with public recognition. Examples included a winter coat and cap.

- (Seppala) Proposed an individual patch, like on the blazer, to be placed on other clothing items.

Chairman Sarg asked Director Kirby to investigate the patch.

**NEXT MEETING:                    Tuesday, 15 December 2015 at 10:00 AM**

**LOCATION:**

**802 Silver Lake Blvd, Suite 100, Dover, DE**